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TELEGRAM

June 22, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 2062 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: PREL, PGOV
Captions: None
Subject: UAE CROWN PRINCE ADVISOR ON SAUDI INSTABILITY, HANDLING
EXTREMISTS, BROADENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
Ref: None

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 02062

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ACTION: POL
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CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CDA:RAALBRIGHT
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4825
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 4082

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 002062

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/21/2009
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE CROWN PRINCE ADVISOR ON SAUDI INSTABILITY,
HANDLING EXTREMISTS, BROADENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Ref: (A) Abu Dhabi 1766, (B) 03 Abu Dhabi 3146

Classified by Richard A. Albright, Charge d'Affaires,
a.i., reasons 1. 5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met on June 14 with Mohamed Habrourh Al-Suweidi, chairman of the National Bank of Abu Dhabi and close advisor to the Al-Nahyan ruling family. Their discussion covered the uncertain security situation in Saudi Arabia and its repercussions in the UAE, the disparities between the Northern Emirates and the wealthy emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the UAE's handling of extremists within its borders, and expanding the bounds of political participation in the UAE. End Summary.

Saudi security situation and repercussions in the UAE

12. (C) Habrroush, who wields considerable political power behind the scenes through his close relationship with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Shaykh Khalifa and his membership on the Executive and Supreme Petroleum Councils of Abu Dhabi, said that the UAE is very concerned about the situation in Saudi Arabia. He said further deterioration in the Kingdom's security situation would have major repercussions on the UAE, with Saudis fleeing to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The longer term political implications are far more serious, he warned. Habrroush argued that the Saudis need to act swiftly - even if it means borrowing from the banks -- to at least provide the basic material needs for the many disaffected and unemployed Saudis. This should be the Saudis' first priority, he continued, because under Islam, the person who goes hungry or homeless is not bound by any of the rules. There is no excuse for the Saudi ruling family not to act immediately to provide the basic material needs of their poorer subjects, he said. The national dialogue on reform and women's issues is important, but it cannot become the only movement in Saudi Arabia. "It is not enough to talk. They must act on the basic human needs and continue to talk about the broader social and political reform," Habrroush said.

Northern Emirates lagging behind Abu Dhabi and Dubai

13. (C) The Ambassador commented on the standard of living gap between the northern Emirates and the wealthier emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai and asked Habrroush if that worried the rulers in light of events in Saudi Arabia. He said that the federal government (meaning decision-makers in Abu Dhabi) would have to play a larger role in improving the livelihood of the northern Emirates, especially Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, and Fujairah. He said Abu Dhabi is already accomplishing a lot in Fujairah, citing the desalinization project as one of the ways to generate employment opportunities and pump money into the local economy. Shaykh Saud in Ras Al Khaimah is working diligently to attract projects to that Emirate and to improve education. Abu Dhabi is supporting him as well, but Habrroush added that "we need to do more for the northern Emirates because it is in our interest to do so."

Extremists in the UAE and how to handle them

14. (C) The Ambassador inquired whether Habrroush believed there was a growing presence of extremists in the UAE, and whether he thought the authorities were handling them effectively. He said that the UAE has the luxury of having a fairly open and tolerant society where extremist thinking has not flourished. Nevertheless, he said it is important to remain vigilant and weed out those who have the capacity to lead others in a negative direction. Because of the small size of the UAE population (4 million) and the very strong tribal and family bonds, it is important that the UAEG address the extremist element in a quiet and effective manner rather than in a heavy-handed way that could create more enemies. "Some of the younger people believe we need to be heavy-handed with anyone showing extremist tendencies, but we advise against that because, as we have seen in other countries, you create more enemies that way."

15. (C) (Comment: Habrroush was clearly alluding to some within the ruling family circle in Abu Dhabi who are advocating for a more robust response to the extremists they identify. When the Ambassador discussed this with

Abu Dhabi Deputy Crown Prince and Chief of Staff of the UAE Armed Forces Shaykh Mohammed bin Zayed (ref A), he had told her that there were ongoing consultations on how best to handle the Muslim Brotherhood activists identified in civilian positions, and that no final decisions had been made. We can assume Habroutsh is advocating with Crown Prince Khalifa and others to handle these extremists carefully through the tribal and clan structure, and not through harsher methods, which is what MbZ advocated for those he identified within the military. End Comment.)

Political participation

16. (C) As we reported a year ago (ref B), Habroutsh is one of those high-ranking Emiratis who believes that it is time for political openness in the UAE, through some form of elected or appointed Federal National Council, to give a voice to the people in the direction of the country. He also mentioned the need for "more transparency in budget decisions and clearer lines between the 'public purse' and the 'private ruling family' purse. People need to know how their country's resources are being spent."

ALBRIGHT